

What is claimed is:

a 1. A composition for the improvement of bowel function comprising polyethylene glycol and a fiber bulking agent, wherein the polyethylene glycol is present in a weight ratio of polyethylene glycol to fiber of at least about 1:2 *and no more than about 7:1*

2. The composition of Claim 1, wherein the polyethylene glycol is present in a weight ratio of polyethylene glycol to fiber of at least about 1:1.

3. The composition of Claim 2, wherein the polyethylene glycol is a solid at about 25 °C.

4. The composition of Claim 2, wherein the polyethylene glycol is a liquid at about 25 °C.

5. The composition of Claim 2, wherein the fiber is psyllium fiber.

6. The composition of Claim 2, wherein the fiber is methyl cellulose fiber.

7. The composition of Claim 2, wherein the polyethylene glycol is present in a weight ratio of polyethylene glycol to fiber of no more than about 7:1.

7. 8. The composition of Claim 3, dissolved or dispersed in an aqueous medium.

8. 9. The composition of Claim 3, incorporated into a foodstuff.

9. 10. The composition of Claim 4, dissolved or dispersed in an aqueous medium.

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~~11~~. The composition of Claim 4, incorporated into a foodstuff.

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~~12~~. The composition of Claim 2, further including a gas-reducing agent in an amount sufficient to counteract intestinal gas production.

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~~13~~. The composition of Claim ¹¹~~12~~, wherein the gas-reducing agent is derived from fennel seed.

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~~14~~. The composition of Claim ²~~8~~, further including a wetting agent in an amount sufficient to promote dispersion of the composition in the medium.

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~~15~~. The composition of Claim ¹³~~14~~, wherein the wetting agent is a sugar.

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~~16~~. The composition of Claim ²~~4~~, further including a wetting agent in an amount sufficient to promote dispersion of the composition in the medium.

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~~17~~. The composition of Claim ³~~3~~, wherein the polyethylene glycol is PEG 3350.

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~~18~~. The composition of Claim ⁷~~8~~, wherein the fiber is psyllium, wherein the polyethylene glycol is present in a weight ratio of polymer to fiber of from about 5:1 to about 6:1; and wherein the composition further includes a gas-reducing agent in an amount sufficient to counteract intestinal gas production.

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~~19~~. The composition of Claim ¹⁷~~18~~, wherein the gas-reducing agent is derived from fennel seed.

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~~20~~. The composition of Claim ¹⁸~~19~~, further including a wetting agent in an amount sufficient to promote dispersion of the composition in the medium.

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~~21~~. The composition of Claim ¹⁹~~20~~, wherein the wetting agent is a sugar.

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~~22~~. The composition of Claim ²⁰~~21~~, wherein the wetting agent is dextrose.

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~~23~~. The composition of Claim ⁷~~8~~, wherein the fiber is methyl cellulose, wherein the polyethylene glycol is present in a weight ratio of polymer to fiber of from about 1:1 to about 1.5:1; and wherein the composition further includes a gas-reducing agent in an amount sufficient to counteract intestinal gas production.

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~~24~~. The composition of Claim ²²~~23~~, wherein the gas-reducing agent is derived from fennel seed.

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~~25~~. The composition of Claim ²³~~24~~, further including a wetting agent in an amount sufficient to promote dispersion of the composition in the medium.

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~~26~~. The composition of Claim ²⁴~~25~~, wherein the wetting agent is a sugar.

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~~27~~. The composition of Claim ²⁵~~26~~, wherein the wetting agent is dextrose.

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~~28~~. A dosage for oral administration of the composition of Claim ³~~3~~, containing from about 15 to 25 g of polyethylene glycol.

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~~29~~. The dosage of the composition of Claim ²⁷~~28~~, containing about 20 g polyethylene glycol.

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~~30~~. The dosage of Claim ²⁷~~28~~, dissolved or dispersed in from about 6 to 10 fl.oz. of aqueous medium.

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~~31~~. The dosage of Claim ²⁹~~30~~, wherein the composition further contains a gas-reducing agent derived from fennel seed in an amount sufficient to counteract intestinal gas production.

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~~32~~. The dosage of Claim ³⁰~~31~~, wherein the composition further comprises a wetting agent in an amount sufficient to disperse the composition in the aqueous medium.

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~~33~~. A method for improving bowel function in a mammal, comprising orally administering the composition of Claim ¹~~1~~ to the mammal, in an amount sufficient to improve bowel motility, stool formation, or both.

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~~34~~. A method for improving bowel function in a mammal, comprising orally administering polyethylene glycol to the mammal, in an amount sufficient to improve bowel motility, stool formation, or both. /